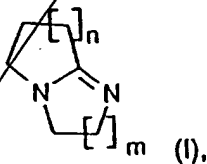


in the presence of a basic [catalysts] catalyst at from -20 to 200°C to form [ $\beta$ -alkoxynitriles] a  $\beta$ -alkoxynitrile, and

- b) subsequent hydrogenation of the [ $\beta$ -alkoxynitriles]  $\beta$ -alkoxynitrile in the presence of a hydrogenation catalyst, without prior removal or neutralization of said basic catalyst,

which [comprises] consists essentially of using in the first step a diazabicycloalkene catalyst of the formula I



where from 1 to 4 hydrogen atoms on the diazabicycloalkene nucleus may be independently replaced by the radicals  $R^1$  to  $R^4$ , in which case  $R^1$ ,  $R^2$ ,  $R^3$  and  $R^4$  are each  $C_{1-20}$ -alkyl,  $C_{6-20}$ -aryl or  $C_{7-20}$ -arylalkyl, and

$n$  and  $m$  are each an integer from 1 to 6, and effecting the hydrogenation in the second step at from 50 to 250°C in the presence of a hydrogenation catalyst and of the catalyst of the formula I.

#### REMARKS

The amendments to claim 6 suggested or required by the examiner have been made. The rejection under 35 USC 112 has thus been rendered moot.